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George G. Hunter

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ME 880 Doctoral Seminar in Evangelization

Spring Semester, 2003
 School of World Mission and Evangelism
 Asbury Theological Seminary
 Instructor: George Hunter

I. Course Description (revised):

Advanced readings in literatures that inform Christian Evangelization, with attention to some of the “classic” texts that all advanced students in Evangelization should know, and to texts that reflect, and/or contribute to, and “interdisciplinary” approach to understanding the propagation of Christianity’s gospel. Students will contribute to most of the class sessions out of their reading, research, and reflection. For D. Miss. And Ph.D. students; others by consent of instructor.

II. Course Objectives:

1. Acquire working knowledge of some of the classic texts that inform evangelization.
2. Become conversant with some of the issues within the study of Evangelization.
3. To gain breadth in understanding how evangelization is understood from the perspectives of other academic fields.
4. To gain experience in interfacing the insights of other fields to help inform the strategy and practice of evangelization.
5. To facilitate the student’s capacity for reflection, and critique, in his or her interaction with evangelism literature and evangelism ministries.
6. To contribute to the student’s capacity for advancing the theory, lore, and practice of Christian evangelism.

III. Reading Assignments:

Most of the course sessions will focus on five books that need to be read before the class session for which they are assigned. The books are all available in Asbury’s Cokesbury Bookstore. They are assigned in the following order:

1. Stark, Rodney. The Rise of Christianity.
2. Fletcher, Richard. The Barbarian Conversion.
3. James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience.
4. McLaren, Brian. More Ready Than You Realize.
5. Patrick, Confession (handout)
6. Finney, Charles G. Lectures on Revivals of Religion, ch’s 1 and 14 (handout)
7. Alcoholics Anonymous, fourth edition.

IV. Requirements and Written Assignments:

Most of the class sessions will expect a (brief) written assignment and a (brief) oral presentation from each student. (Each assignment for each class session is rather specific; the student, however, should not interpret the assignments too narrowly).

There is no final exam, but the course assigns five written papers – each paper interfacing a textbook's topic with at least one other source addressing the same issue or interpreting the contribution of the same writer. (When you present papers in class, come with enough **copies** of the paper for everyone in class.)

Class Sessions (Subject to modification)

February 12: Introduction, orientation, assignments.

February 19: Insights from Stark's The Rise of Christianity, chapters 1-6.

Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing some of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

February 26: Insights from Stark's The Rise of Christianity, chapters 7-10, and Stark's article "Efforts to Christianize Europe, 40-2000, from Journal of Contemporary Religion, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2001 (handout).

Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing some of "Stark's other insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

March 5: Class papers on the expansion of early Christianity (or early and medieval Christianity).

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (5 to 6 pages), in which you a) summarize several of Stark's main ideas purportedly accounting for the expansion of early Christianity, b) report from another academic author (such as Kenneth Scott Latourette, Michael Green, Adolf Harnack, Ramsey McMullen, or Arthur Nock), and c) state and defend your own (provisional conclusions. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 20% of the course grade.)

March 12: Insights from Fletcher's The Barbarian Conversion, chapters 1-6.

- a) Come to class prepared to summarize and discuss the Ten Questions that Fletcher identifies in chapter one, and identify any additional Questions that should be addressed by scholars in Evangelization.
- b) Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing some of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

March 19: Insights from Fletcher's The Barbarian Conversion, chapters 7-12.

Come to class prepared to present a one to two page paper summarizing some of Stark's insights or contentions, with your own application or critique.

March 26: Insights from McLaren's More Ready Than You Realize

Bryan McLaren is our guest today. We will visit with him on two subjects: 1) The insights from his book. 2) The challenge of writing for the Church and the World. No paper is required from your reading of More Ready Than You Realize, but arrive prepared to engage in discussion with McLaren and each other.

March 27, 2:30 PM: Meet with MS 610 The Ministry of Evangelism, in M307. Brian McLaren is the guest presenter.

April 2: Insights from Fletcher's The Barbarian Conversion, chapters 13-15.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (5 to 6 pages suggested), in which you a) summarize several of Fletcher's main ideas purportedly accounting for the expansion of Christianity from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, b) report from another academic author, and c) state and defend your own (provisional) conclusions. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 20% of the course grade.)

April 9: Reading Week; no class

April 16: No class; instructor out of town. Read William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, ch's. 1-10, and 20.

April 23: Class papers on Conversion and/or Religious Experience.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (5 to 6 pages suggested), in which you a) summarize several of William James' main ideas about religious experience and/or religious conversion, b) report from another academic author, and c) state and defend your own (provisional) conclusions. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 20% of the course grade.)

April 30: No class, instructor out of town.

May 7: Class papers on Patrick's Confession OR Finney's Lectures on Revivals of Religion.

Read both of these sources, but come to class prepared to present a brief (5 or 6 pages) research paper reflecting on the writing of ONE of these giants of the evangelical Christian past. a) Summarize several of the writer's driving ideas, convictions, or contentions; b) report from some other academic author; and c) state and defend your own provisional conclusions. (Instructor's appraisal will count 20% of the course grade.)

May 14: No class; instructor out of town.

May 21: (Exam Week. No final exam, but class will meet.)

Insights from Alcoholics Anonymous, fourth edition. Read pp. 1-103 and any five of the testimonies in the "Big Book," and also the chapter on Recovery Ministries (handout) from Hunter's forthcoming book Radical Outreach: Recovering Apostolic Ministry and Evangelism.

Come to class prepared to present a brief research paper (5 to 6 pages suggested) in which you reflect upon this "colleague movement's" approach to reaching and restoring people. Based upon your reading of the "Big Book," Hunter's chapter, and at least one other authoritative source, a) identify several of the "recovery movement's main ideas and approaches, and b) some things that the Church might learn (or relearn) from AA. (Instructor's appraisal will count as 20% of the course grade.)